

## MULTI-GENRE PROJECT: genre research, theme, structures (step 3)

Step 1 was to choose a topic and write your initial proposal; this was followed by step 2, in which you wrote your revised topic proposal and received approval for your topic and theme. Now, you are in step 3 of the MGP creation process, which requires you to think more carefully about your project as a whole—the big picture—as well as the individual genres you will include in your final MGP. This part of the process must begin with some research on genres; you need to understand the conventions and expectations of the genres you are writing and learn about what is and is not acceptable and appropriate for each. Your project, too, should be taking on a clearer shape in your mind by now, so it is a good time to rethink your focus/theme—the single, overall message you want your MGP to communicate to readers once they read/view your project as a whole—and, therefore, how each individual genre will contribute to the overall meaning of the project.

### GOALS OF YOUR MGP: clarification and reminders on focus, critical thinking, and outcomes

**MAIN GOAL:** To present your topic and theme (main idea) by exploring it within several rhetorical situations and through multiple and various perspectives.

**LEARNING GOALS:** To practice different kinds of writing (genres)  
To become more aware of common conventions and expectations in English writing  
To expand your ability to write appropriately in different formats, contexts, and styles  
To increase awareness of audience and writing context, and how these influence writing  
To more maturely, creatively, and meaningfully develop a thesis through implication

### WAYS TO APPROACH YOUR MGP: choosing genres logically

An MGP frees student writers to *allow meaning to dictate form* instead of approaching writing from the reverse (and much more common perspective) of trying to make an idea “fit” within the confines of a single, limited genres such as paragraphs, essays, responses, and summaries (all common college writing assignments). Try to open up your mind and break out of the “must write essay” mindset, instead allowing the idea you want to communicate lead you to genre that will best allow you to present and share it effectively with a desired group of people (readers/audience). Here are some suggestions for approaching your genre choices and viewing the combination of genres as parts that will logically make up the whole:

- Present multiple and even conflicting perspectives on an event, person, or topic
- Integrate factual or practical knowledge and information with theoretical, opinion- and idea-based discussions
- Highlight the author’s (your) personal interests and special expertise in relation to a specific topic
- Approach a problem from various perspectives (genre) in order to solve it
- Analyze a problem from various perspectives; focus on different ways to view a problem, idea, or situation
- Communicate a single message—though not the exact same information—through many “channels”; saying the same thing to different groups of people (audiences) through widely assorted media (genres)
- Present views on a topic from the perspectives of several different people, generations, cultures, nations, etc.

All of your genres must clearly connect to your focus (thesis/theme) and include only ones that relate well to the general topic, make sense and are realistic in light of the topic, and point towards (each genre helps to add a bit of meaning to) the single point of significance you want to communicate, otherwise called your rhetorical purpose or thesis/theme.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO UNDERSTAND...

It is imperative that you understand that **each genre must contain new information, something not found in any of the other genres**. In other words, do not simply repeat ideas in several different forms of writing. Each genre should communicate a new aspect of your topic while also helping to further develop your theme/message. Also, be creative. For example, if you’ve chosen an issue related to teenagers, you could write a speech to a high school class explaining the importance of the issue. If your topic is sports related, you could write a sports article for a magazine or newspaper. Think creatively, don’t be afraid to do something unusual, get curious, experiment with the unfamiliar. Your grade for the MGP will depend heavily on the usual five criteria as well as several other important features: effective, thoughtful genre choices; variety among genres; creativity of genre choice and content; authenticity of genres; clarity and quality of prologue and epilogue; organization of genres and purposeful structure of entire project; care taken in formatting

genres realistically; inclusion of images, photos, graphics (at least one is required); and overall presentation, including things like design, font-choice, formatting, presence of all required elements, and so on.

## **GENRES RESEARCH: absolutely, positively, unquestionably necessary!**

You have now chosen a topic and gotten my approval, so your next step is to do some research on most or all of the genre options for your optional genres. (These are listed below under “Genre Choices”—note that I have included some extra genres here that are not on the original handout). This research is absolutely necessary because you need to understand what each genre is in order to decide which ones will be the best choices for your project. And, of course, you need to know how to write in each genre in an acceptable, conventional way. Consider the following for all genres you research:

- what kind of information they typically contain
- how they are structured
- what kind of voice, tone, level of formality, and diction is appropriate
- who your audience is
- any other important conventions of the genre

Take notes as you research each genre because you will need to discuss them with me and understand them well enough to be able to write appropriately. Your goal is simple: learn about the genres you are interested in using/writing for your project so you can more effectively create a draft in the specific style of each genre you choose.

### GENRE CHOICES FOR OPTIONAL GENRES:

#### **GENRE LIST NUMBER THREE—choose ONE from this list**

Extended Photo Caption	Personal letter	Adventure story
Short Story	Professional or business letter	Ghost story
Fairy Tale	Inquiry letter or application letter	Brochure, pamphlet, newsletter
Legend	Eulogy	PowerPoint presentation
Letter to the Editor	Autobiography (essay)	Web page
Biography (essay)	Critique of published source	Tribute
Speech	Book review	
Memoir	Business or scientific report	
Interview	Police report	

#### **GENRE LIST NUMBER FOUR—choose ONE from this list**

Email	Application form	Biographical summary
Advertisement/Sign/Flyer	Job description or posting	Autobiographical summary
Radio announcement (script)	Thank-you card	Book or source summary
Dedication	Personal or classified ad	Encyclopedia article
Obituary	Poem	Class lesson plan
Dialogue (conversation)	Song lyrics	Recipe or menu
Diary or journal entry	Contest entry application	Timeline/chain of events
How-to Instructions	Advocacy letter (to organization or institution)	Game rules
Map (w/explanation and analysis)	Local news report	Poster for movie, book, event
Comic strip	Video game review or announcement	Blog

#### **IDEAS FOR THE “IN-BETWEEN” STUFF (totally optional worth considering)**

Quotes	Schedule/planner	“To-do” list
Greeting cards	Invitations	Announcements
Bits of inner monologue	Tips, advice, suggestions	Photos or images
Questions (personal, professional, philosophical)		